APPARENT PECULIARITIES IN THE FBI'S REPORTING OF OSWALD'S FPCC ACTIVITIES

On August 9, 1963, the New Orleans FBI first learned that Oswald was distributing literature from "Confidential Informant NO T-6." (It was noted that "contact with NO T-6 has been insufficient to judge the reliability of his information"(17H769). In the body of the report NO T-6 is referred to once as "she."(17H756)) Although T-6 did describe both Oswald and (inaccurately) the leaflets he was distributing, "the informant was unable to obtain a leaflet." (17H756) This was at about 1:15 p.m., shortly after Oswald had started his leafleting (17H760); he had some leaflets left when the fight broke out at about 4 p.m. (17H161). It seems unlikely that Oswald would have refused to give anyone a leaflet. I can think of two likely interpretations of the informant's statement: NO T-6 was a passerby who did not want to give the FBI his name, and was unwilling to go near that filthy Commie to get a leaflet; or - a more interesting possibility - T-6 was a real FBI informant who knew Oswald and did not want to reveal his presence to him by asking for a leaflet. In any case, it might be worthwhile to try to find out who T-6 was.

The strangeness of the whole matter of the "self-serving" Quigley interview is obvious and need not be discussed here. Even Earl Warren found it hard to believe that persons arrested by local police "frequently" ask to speak to the FBI (4H435). As I have noted in a previous memo, copies of Oswald's literature which Quigley may have obtained are not included in CE 826.

Oswald's distribution of literature on August 16 is not mentioned at all in the Kaack report, CE 826. The other relevant report is that of SA DeBrueys, dated October 25, 1963, entitled "FPCC - N.O. Division." (See 17H797; a copy of the DeBrueys report is pages 24-41 of document VI-29 in CD 1114.) DeBrueys reported that "On August 16, 1963, two persons, one of which is believed identical with OSWALD, who identified themselves as being connected with the ... FPCC ... distributed pamphlets in front of the International Trade Mart in New Orleans. They remained in that location for only a few minutes and departed." (P. 3)

It is noted that the source of this information is not identified either by name or by informant number, as is usual in FBI reports. (The only other such unattributed statement in the DeBrueys report is one concerning confidential sources, not further identified, who had no new knowledge of Oswald (p. 11).) This suggests that perhaps an FBI agent, maybe DeBrueys himself, witnessed the literature distribution. This is not too improbable - the press was there, and it is common knowledge that the FBI does send observers to left-wing activities. (See, for example, a report of FBI and NOPD observers at an anti-draft protest, in the Times-Picayune, 2/3/68, p.2)

There was quite a bit of activity related to this distribution of literature, and to the subsequent radio programs, that is not in the FBI reports:

DeBrueys' report notes (p. 3) that on August 19, Jesse Core, who had an office in the Trade Mart, provided a description of the two men who had handed out literature. (One was w/m, 145 lb., 5'9", age 32 or 33, pallid complexion, black hair; the other was 22 or 23, 6', black hair, narrow shoulders, broad waist.) However, according to the report of an FBI interview with Core on 11/29/63, Core called the FBI on August 16 after having watched the activity at the Trade Mart for 20 or 25 minutes (CD 75, p. 692; Oswald in N.O., p. 466). It is further noted that one of the "Hands off Cuba" handbills in FBI Exhibit D-25 has the following notations on the back: "97-74," which is the field office file number of the DeBrueys report; "1A5," significance unknown; "Rec 8/20/63 from Jesse Core," but no agent's initials. This copy of the leaflet is not mentioned in the DeBrueys report. (I have been unable to find further information on FBI Exhibit D-25.)

Charles Steele testified that he called the FBI on August 16, after he heard that his picture was on television; the FBI suggested that he call the TV stations if he wanted to have them stop showing it (10H66,69). If he told the FBI that he was helping give out leaflets - and not just that he was in the picture - it seems surprising that the DeBrueys report does not mention this, but rather leaves the impression that Oswald's companion was unidentified. Or is the "second" person in this report actually the third - and mysterious - one?

Carlos Quiroga told the Secret Service that "he had notified their (the FBI's) office that Oswald was handing out what he assumed to be pro-communist literature in front of the International Trade Mart ... and the FBI had given him the cold shoulder" (CE 3119, p. 21). What was Quiroga doing there anyhow? Why did he advise Bringuier that Oswald was distributing literature (10H39)? Why did the FBI give him the cold shoulder? It is unfortunate, and suspicious, that there are no FBI reports filed under Quiroga's name at the Archives.

The Kaack report notes that WDSU gave the FBI a transcript of the Oswald-Butler-Bringuier debate the day after it took place (17H763); this is also reported (with the wrong date - see CE 833, # 15) in the DeBrueys' report. The Kaack report adds that Stuckey talked to the FBI on August 30 about his conversation with Oswald. What one would not know except for Stuckey's testimony is that on August 20 he gave the tape of his interview of Oswald on the 17th to the FBI; the FBI was sufficiently interested to make a transcript and a copy of the tape. (This transcript, a copy of which the FBI gave to Stuckey, was not introduced as a Stuckey exhibit, although Stuckey's own transcript, Exhibit 2, was known to have errors (11H164-5).)

On August 21, the FBI in Washington instructed the Dallas and N.O. offices to conduct further investigation of Oswald as a result of his activities on August 9 (CE 834, # 47). On September 9, NO T-7, "who is familiar with Cuban activities in the New Orleans area," advised that he did not know Oswald (17H764). Does "Cuban activities" mean pro-Castro or anti-Castro? If the latter, who might the FBI's informant have been? Guy Banister, whose group is said to have kept extensive files on leftists, seems a likely candidate. (Another likely FBI informant is someone in INCA, but he presumably would not have claimed that Oswald was unknown to him.)

On the next day, Frank Bartes of the CRC also advised that he did not know Oswald (17H764). It is my impression that the CRC was not very active at that time (see CE 1414); the author of an FBI memorandum of 5/1/64 on Orest Pena (CD 984h; Oswald in N.O. pp. 705-9) thought that the CRC was "an anti-Castro organization in New Orleans which ceased to exist approximately in December of 1961." (The CRC no doubt lost much of its usefulness as a CIA front after the Bay of Pigs, but its government subsidy was reportedly not withdrawn until the spring of 1963. (NYT, 5/1/63, p.11)) For what reason, then, did the FBI ask Bartes about Oswald?

My overall impression is that much was going on in the New Orleans FBI office that the Warren Commission may never have considered. I have seen no indication that the Commission asked for or was given everything relating to Oswald in the Dallas or New Orleans field office files. The Commission criticized the FBI's "unduly restrictive view of its responsibilities in preventive intelligence work" before the assassination. Perhaps they did suspect that there were some irregularities in the FBI's treatment of the Oswald case.

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NOTE WELL: It is obvious that this memo is largely speculative. In particular, I have no evidence for my opinions other than that which is cited. Please do not accept any of my conclusions without critical examination.